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HOUSEKEEPERS' CIAT

Tuesday, October 9, 1934.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Questions and Answers." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics,
U. S. Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

My congratulations this morning go to the young lady who wrote a letter asking about cleaning the kitchen sink and the bathtub and washbowl. If I'm any judge of housekeepers -- and I ought to be after all these years -- if I'm any judge, I predict that this young wife is going to be an expert at her job. And I also predict that the enameled fixtures as well as everything else in that new home of hers will last long and wear well, because she'll care for them correctly from the very start.

Well, about the cleaning materials to use on your bathroom and kitchen enamel equipment. That's a matter for serious thought. You see, coarse gritty scouring powders will soon scratch the surface and make it harder and harder to keep clean. Yes, you can soon spoil the looks of your white and shining washbowl just by the wrong cleaners. Gritty scourers will scratch it and materials containing strong acids or alkalies can stain or eat into the finish. I've actually seen kitchen sinks worn through to the black iron foundation just by years of the wrong kind of scouring.

And the nickel-plated faucets and other fixtures -- they'll come to grief, too, if you clean them with harsh substances that scratch the surface or break through the plating.

But for both nickel and enamel, you have your choice of three perfectly safe cleaners. One is soap and hot water. That will do when the surface isn't very soiled. Another is a fine scouring powder like whiting, that won't scratch. A third is kerosene oil and warm water which you'll need to wash off with soap and water. The kerosene cuts the grease and the whiting or other fine powder supplies just enough friction.

The ideal plan is to clean bathroom fixtures daily. Then soil and stain can't accumulate on them. And speaking of stains, you can take off any iron stains made by the water from porcelain bowls or tubs with an oxalic acid solution. But remember that oxalic acid is a poison. Wash it all off carefully after using it and keep the bottle far out of reach of the youngsters in the family.

So much for cleaning.

Now here's a story about a bargain dress that ought to interest all of us women who are buying ready-mades this fall. Sometime during the summer one of my friends picked up a dark-green crepe dress which she considered a great bargain. It cost very little, had plenty of snap and style, was a becoming color, and would do for summer traveling and later for fall wear -- at least, she thought it would do for fall wear. But she reckoned wrong. She writes that the dress is already going to shreds. It wasn't very long before the silk began to cut along the stitching lines. And then it began to give way across the shoulders and under the arms. This friend now wants to know what "ailed that dress," why it seemed to "just rot and go to pieces" though the crepe looked durable and firm when she bought it.

Well, I haven't seen the dress, of course, but I'll make a guess that the fabric was weighted with metal. And weighted silks rarely give the wear that "pure-dye" silks do. Miss Scott, who is an expert at such things, says that you can often tell when a dress is made of weighted silk just by the feel of it. A weighted crepe, for example, has more sheen, feels heavier to lift, and is more slippery than a pure-dye crepe. When you try the dress on, you may notice that the fabric feels clammy next to the skin or is uncomfortably hot on a warm day. Weighted silks are very inclined to give way along lines of stitching and to rub into shreds in the places that get the most wear -- such places as under the arms or on the hips or across the shoulders. They sometimes even split while hanging in a closet.

Then here's another characteristic of these weighted silks. They don't press as well as pure-dye silks. In fact, you often have to use steam in pressing to get the wrinkles out. Moreover, they may not hold their color well. So before you buy a bargain silk dress, find out if you can just what the fabric is. Otherwise, it may turn out to be an expensive waste rather than a bargain. Look at the cloth and feel of it, read any labels attached, ask the clerk for exact information about it. If you're skeptical, better play safe and not buy if you want good wear from the dress.

The last question is about foods. I'll read it. "Dear Aunt Sammy: Will you please tell me which foods contain the most calcium."

I'll be pleased to tell you what the nutritionists list as the calcium-rich foods. Briefly, the foods at the top of the list are milk and milk products and green vegetables. The best source of calcium, of course, is milk -- whole fresh milk or skimmed milk or buttermilk, evaporated or condensed or dried milk. Cottage cheese goes on that list, of course, since it's made of skimmed milk. In fact, cheese in general takes its place there. Among the greens at the top of the list are beet greens, chard, dandelion greens, collards, kale, turnip and mustard greens. You can also depend on cauliflower and broccoli to supply you with some calcium

That's enough questions for one week. Next Tuesday we'll carry on with more.

